

# PRESS RELEASE

August 22, 2006

**RE: UNITED STATES v. SALVATORE BERTINO**

United States Attorney Terrance P. Flynn announced today that former Laborers International Union of America, Local 91 (hereinafter "Local 91") Vice President SALVATORE BERTINO, age 54, of Niagara Falls, New York, was sentenced for his conviction (via guilty plea) on federal racketeering conspiracy charges. Specifically, Chief United States District Judge Richard J. Arcara sentenced DELLACCIO to fifty one months imprisonment, to be followed by two years of supervised release, and ordered restitution in the amount of \$30,000.

Assistant U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr., and Assistant U.S. Attorney Brett A. Harvey, who handled the case, stated that the charges arose from a lengthy criminal investigation conducted by a variety of federal, state and local agencies into the activities of Local 91, based in Niagara Falls, New York. According to Hochul and Harvey, certain Local 91 members, including BERTINO, engaged in repeated acts of extortion at a number of construction projects in Niagara County, New York, involving dozens of victim companies and employees, over a six year period of time.

The Government's investigation resulted in three trials, and the convictions of eighteen Local 91 members on charges ranging from racketeering conspiracy, to attempted extortion, the attempted destruction of an Alliant Food Service truck, and perjury. On August 1, 2006, the last four defendants charged in this case pleaded guilty mid-trial to racketeering conspiracy and other charges, and are awaiting sentencing.

As part of his initial guilty plea, BERTINO admitted that he and other members of Local 91 committed the following acts of violence and sabotage:

1. property destruction and sabotage at the Wegman's construction site in 1996;
2. property destruction and sabotage at the BFI construction site in 1997;
3. participation in a mass attack upon members of the bricklayers union at the Wegman's construction site in September, 1998;
4. threats and other extortionate conduct at the construction of the Niagara Falls High School in 1999-2000;

5. threats and other extortionate conduct at the Lewiston Porter Middle School in 2001; and

6. threats at Niagara University in 2001;

BERTINO, who agreed to cooperate with the Government, was told by the Court that he was being given consideration in his sentence for that cooperation. United States Attorney Flynn stated that this case demonstrates that the responsibility for the acts of violence and destruction of property committed by certain members of Local 91 led to the highest levels of the union management structure, that is, Vice President. He also said that the fact some of BERTINO's offenses occurred in 1996 demonstrates that his office will continue to tirelessly pursue all allegations of crime no matter when committed, and that those will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

The prosecution was the culmination of a joint investigation on the part of the United States Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the New York State Police, the Niagara County Sheriff's Office, and the Niagara Falls Police Department.